

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-18. (canceled)

19. (currently amended) A message router for routing a message between a server and a protocol gateway and ~~a server~~, the message router comprising:

an authenticator to authenticate that a particular source of a message is an authorized user of a messaging network, said authenticator authenticating said particular source of said message before said message is routed by said message router ~~between a protocol gateway and a server~~;

a load balancer module to determine a least recently used protocol gateway supporting a protocol of said source of said message; and a database accessible by said message router and adapted to store information relating to routing and authentication of said particular source of said message

routing said message to said determined least recently used protocol gateway.

20. (canceled)

21. (previously presented) The message router according to claim 19, wherein:

said message router is a least recently used message router.

22. (previously presented) The message router according to claim 19, wherein:

said message router routes said message to a most specific server corresponding to a message key.

23. (previously presented) The message router according to claim 19, wherein:

said message router routes said message based on a content of said message.

24. (currently amended) A method of routing a message between a server and a protocol gateway ~~and a server~~ comprising:

authenticating that a particular source of a message is an authorized user of a messaging network before said message is routed by a message router ~~between a protocol gateway and a server~~;

determining a least recently used protocol gateway supporting protocol of said source of said message; and ~~accessing a database by said message router; and storing information relating to routing and authentication of said particular source of said message~~

routing said message to said determined least recently used protocol gateway.

25. (canceled)

26. (previously presented) The method of routing a message according to claim 24, wherein:

said server is a least recently used message router.

27. (previously presented) The method of routing a message according to claim 24, further comprising:

routing said message to a most specific server corresponding to a message key.

28. (previously presented) The method of routing a message according to claim 24, further comprising:

routing said message based on a content of said message.

29. (currently amended) An apparatus for routing a message between a server and a protocol gateway ~~and a server~~ comprising:

means for authenticating that a particular source of a message is an authorized user of a messaging network before said message is routed by a message router ~~between a protocol gateway and a server~~;

means for determining a least recently used protocol gateway supporting protocol of said source of said message; and ~~means for accessing a database by said message router; and means for storing information relating to routing and authentication of said particular source of said message~~

means for routing said message to said determined least recently used protocol gateway.

30. (canceled)

31. (previously presented) The apparatus for routing a message according to claim 29, wherein:

said server is a least recently used message router.

32. (previously presented) The apparatus for routing a message according to claim 29, further comprising:

means for routing said message to a most specific server corresponding to a message key.

33. (previously presented) The apparatus for routing a message according to claim 29, further comprising:

means for routing said message based on a content of said message.

34-41. (canceled)